

Updated Guidelines for COVID and Other Respiratory Viruses

On 3/1/24, the CDC updated its COVID quarantine/isolation guidelines to bring them into line with the existing guidelines for influenza, RSV and other respiratory viruses. The update also recognizes changes in the situation with respect to these infections over the past few years, namely:

- Effective vaccines are available for COVID (as well as influenza and RSV)
- Effective antiviral medications are available for COVID (and influenza)
- Population immunity to COVID in the US is high
- Far fewer people are getting seriously ill from COVID infections

This link contains more of the information that the CDC considered in making these updates: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/background/index.html>

The updated CDC guidelines are presented here: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.html> This updated guidance is directed at people who are infected with any respiratory virus. These individuals should:

- Remain home and away from others (including people in the same household) when experiencing symptoms of a respiratory virus infection (e.g. fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, or headache).
- Resume normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both of the following are true:
 - The symptoms are improving overall, and
 - There is no fever when off fever-reducing medication.
- When normal activities are resumed, take added precautions over the next 5 days when with others indoors, e.g. masking, distancing, hand hygiene, optimizing ventilation, testing.
- If fever resumes or symptoms start to worsen, stay home and away from others again and follow the guidelines above.

Note that there is no longer a testing criterion for ending isolation, although testing is still useful for diagnosis and management.

We will be posting the updated guidelines on our website.

Please direct any questions about these updates to: christopherstowell@gmail.com

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